

# DAU Awarded the “ELLI” at Nation’s Largest e-Learning Conference-Exposition

*Collie J. Johnson*

**O**n April 19, the Defense Acquisition University became the proud recipient of ELLI – the e-Learning Industry Award. Sponsored by the U.S. Distance Learning Association (USDLA), the ELLI is the “Oscar” of electronic (distance) learning, or e-Learning, and honors outstanding achievements in distance learning.

Frank J. Anderson Jr., DAU President, accepted the University’s ELLI Award from Dr. John Flores, Executive Director of the USDLA, at the 2001 e-Learning Conference and Exposition. This year’s event, held in Washington, D.C., was the largest e-Learning event ever. According to Flores, the Association received 89 nominations for consideration in five different categories: Higher Education, K-12, Government, Health Care and Telemedicine, and Corporate and Business. DAU was a winner in the Government category for “Excellence in Distance Learning Programming.”

The USDLA Awards Program was created to acknowledge major accomplishments in distance learning and to highlight those instructors, programs, and distance learning professionals who have achieved excellence in the field. It came about as a response to the 21<sup>st</sup> century’s veritable “revolution” in higher education. Technology is not only altering and enhancing the way courses are offered in traditional colleges and universities, it is enabling a whole new educational paradigm.

Distance learning, which traces its origins to the early technology associated with Video Teleconferencing and Video TeleTeaching, is a type of education where students work on their own at home or at the office. To communicate with faculty and other students, they use e-mail, electronic fora, videoconferencing, and other forms of computer-based communication. Most distance learning programs include a computer-based training (CBT) system and communications tools to produce a virtual classroom. Because the Internet and World Wide Web are accessible from virtually all computer platforms, they serve as the foundation for many distance learning systems.

“It seems as though every year there are more and more distance learning programs being launched in corporate, government, military, and academic settings,” said Flores. “Where we once struggled to find distance learning programs across the country, we now find hundreds ... we have seen an explosion in the area of high-quality distance teaching by instructors and trainers.”



Frank J. Anderson Jr. (right), Defense Acquisition University (DAU) President, accepts the “ELLI” Award on behalf of DAU from Dr. John Flores, Executive Director of the U.S. Distance Learning Association, at the 2001 e-Learning Conference-Exposition. The Conference-Exposition was held in Washington, D.C., on April 19, 2001.

DAU took its first steps into the uncharted territory of distance learning back in June 1997 with a trial run of Video TeleTeaching (VTT) at its Fort Belvoir, Va., campus. By October 2000, the University had launched the DAU Virtual Campus, with eight Web-enabled courses and more planned. Besides courses that fulfill DoD’s acquisition education requirements, the Virtual Campus also provides students access to all the functions typically managed in a campus administration building.

“This [ELLI Award] is an unprecedented accomplishment for the University,” said Anderson. “We must lead in areas such as e-Learning or be left behind.” His “Smart Business 20/20” plan for the University calls for implementing even more distributed learning techniques, where appropriate and cost effective, in the years ahead.

More information on USDLA, DAU, or the DAU Virtual Campus is available at the following Web sites:

<http://www.usdla.org>  
<http://www.dau.mil>  
<https://dau4.fedworld.gov/dau/index.htm>